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SUBJECT: DAS PASCOE'S MAY 21-22 POST-WAR TOUR D'HORIZON
WITH GOT OFFICIALS

REF: A) ANKARA 3412 B) ANKARA 3318 C) ANKARA 3409

(U) Classified by Deputy Chief of Mission Robert Deutsch.
Reasons: 1.5 (B and D).

SUMMARY

1. (C) State Department DAS for European Affairs Lynn Pascoe told GOT officials May 21-22 the USG was disappointed with Turkey over its handling of issues of major importance to the US, including Iraq and Cyprus. DAS Pascoe said the door to rebuilding relations was open, but it was up to Turkey to walk through. Only concrete actions would help rebuild the relationship. After arguing that &disappointment8 was a two-way street, GOT officials went out of their way to try to convince Pascoe that Turkey was interested in rebuilding relations. However, they offered little in the way of concrete steps the GOT was willing to take at this time. GOT officials said Turkey wanted to improve relations with Armenia but argued that Yerevan had to take the lead before Ankara would reciprocate. Turkey was committed to enacting EU-related reforms, but GOT officials expressed doubts about the EU's intentions. The MFA pressed for resumption of formal bilateral discussions on the economic relationship and noted the negative impact of the operation in Iraq on the Turkish economy was less than forecast. Turks are discouraged by the recent inconclusive debates in Brussels regarding NATO's role in Iraq, but not yet alarmed at the EU's discussions on future European defense structures. GOT officials were disappointed that Turkey was included as a Tier III country in the Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report and argued that Turkey should be removed from the list. DAS Pascoe's discussions on Cyprus (ref a) and his meeting with MFA U/S Ziyal (septel) are reported separately. End summary.

VIEW FROM WASHINGTON

2. (C) During his May 21-22 meetings in Ankara, EUR DAS Pascoe reminded GOT officials that Washington remained disappointed with Turkey over its handling of issues of major importance to the US. The expectations in Washington following the November 2002 elections had been high. The USG "went all out" to address Ankara's concerns in Iraq and to support Turkey on EU accession. There was a clear assumption in Washington, based on our relationship and the signals we were getting from GOT officials in the months leading up to the March 1 vote on Iraq, that Turkey would be there for us. DAS Pascoe noted the failure to reach an agreement on Cyprus was another huge shock and disappointment, almost on the same scale as Iraq. The USG had worked hard with all of the parties to make sure Turkish concerns were addressed in the Annan plan. At some point, the parties need to look beyond the interests of one or two individuals and do what is right for the Cypriot people and the interests of the region. DAS Pascoe added that the US had demonstrated its intention to maintain the bilateral relationship via Secretary Powell's visit, the President's decision to include \$1 billion in assistance for Turkey in the supplemental, and in the call between President Bush and Prime Minister Erdogan. Pascoe said the door to rebuilding relations was open, but it was up to Turkey to take the necessary steps. Only concrete actions, including on Cyprus, Iraq, the Middle East, opening the Armenian border, and economic reform, would help.

GOT REACTION

3. (C) Minister of Finance Unakitan summed up the views expressed by GOT officials: the GOT had been disappointed by

the outcome of the March 1 Parliamentary vote, and the key figures (including PM Erdogan and FM Gul) shared a strong desire to strengthen the bilateral relationship. Unakitan said he had recently discussed with FM Gul steps Turkey could take to improve the relationship and had shared those ideas with the Ambassador (ref b). Presidential Foreign Policy Advisor Atacanli also expressed disappointment. He said it was important for Washington to look at matters from the Turkish perspective and asked for more empathy in the future. Ankara had witnessed colder winds from that side of the Atlantic following the March 1 vote. He expressed hope that this and other visits would "warm the climate," saying "I hope Turkey and the US can put the whole thing behind us and look to the future." MFA DG for the Americas Banguoglu said the US appeared ungrateful for the support Turkey had provided in the operation against Iraq. He said that the USG approach of "anything less than 100 percent compliance is not enough" was wrong. "If one were to examine Turkey's support for US policy against Iraq since the first Gulf War, you would conclude that Turkey ranks very high, possibly higher than the UK."

RELATIONS WITH ARMENIA

14. (C) GOT officials were largely defensive about improving relations between Turkey and Armenia: the GOT had been forthcoming with Yerevan and was prepared to reciprocate, but the ball was in Yerevan's court. Atacanli said the GOA needed to change its frame of mind and begin to look at Turkey in a more cool-headed manner if it wanted to improve relations. MFA DG for the Caucasus Akinci noted that Turkey and Armenia were carrying on very discreet DDG-level talks -- with the next round scheduled for Istanbul at the end of May -- to get bilateral relations moving. Akinci argued that Yerevan needed to make a distinction between "state-to-state" and "nation-to-nation" relations. The latter, mired in historical debates about the fate of Armenians at the end of the Ottoman era and exacerbated by the Armenian Diaspora, inhibit progress on the bilateral front. As a prerequisite for improved Turkey-Armenia ties, Yerevan must recognize the current Turkey-Armenia border and give up claims to Turkish territory. He added that there was also the issue of Ankara's support for Baku over Nagorno-Karabakh.

EUROPEAN UNION

15. (C) MFA DDG for European Affairs Yenel said that GOT-EU relations had improved since the December 2002 Copenhagen Summit. The Greeks have been extremely supportive of Turkey during their presidency. Yenel said the GOT is committed to EU-related reform. The current one-party government is in a better position to pass reform legislation than the previous government. That said, he acknowledged that some of the reform legislation adopted by Parliament had not been implemented, arguing that some elements of the Turkish bureaucracy do not believe in the EU and are resisting reforms. Yenel insisted the GOT has caught a good wind and will make the reforms necessary to meet EU membership criteria. He said the only obstacle he fears is Cyprus: "What will happen if the GOT makes all the necessary reforms and doesn't solve Cyprus?" All the other candidates were required only to meet membership criteria, he averred. If Turkey is kept out of the EU because of Cyprus, there will be a strong public reaction against the EU. Presidential Advisor Atacanli said the GOT was prepared to do its part to gain admission to the EU, but it would need an extra nudge from the US to secure support from the EU.

ECONOMY

16. (C) Finance Minister Unakitan said severe pre-war anxiety had given way to cautious post-war optimism, as oil prices fell, tourism began to pick up, interest rates declined and expectations improved. He said the announcement of the \$1B U.S. assistance package to Turkey had provided a large psychological boost as well. Unakitan said the GOT was working with the IMF to implement the reform program, and PM Erdogan's views on this do not diverge from those of the Fund. Unakitan said he is sticking to tight fiscal policy, which means having to say "no" to many requests from other ministers. In a separate meeting, MFA DG for Bilateral Economic Affairs Ozuye said there were signs that Turkey's economy was improving. After arguing (unsuccessfully) that

that the US textile quota was hurting Turkey, Ozuye asked that the US and Turkey resume the three bilateral meetings (the Economic Policy Commission, the Joint Economic Commission and TIFA) to provide a forum to discuss issues of mutual concern.

NATO

17. (C) MFA DDG for NATO Affairs Kizildeli said Turkey was currently confused and discouraged by the recent debates at NATO. The GOT found Germany's dwelling on the question of a NATO footprint in Iraq during debates on assistance to Poland particularly discouraging. Since Prague, the Turks have seen little progress on capabilities. She lamented that France would not allow discussion of the use of the NATO Response Force in the DPC; if it could only be discussed in the NAC, it was virtually "unusable." While it was somewhat encouraging that NATO had gradually been allowed to participate in ISAF in Afghanistan, Kizildeli said "France allowing NATO to take part after everyone else had lost interest was no way to keep NATO responsive and viable." Kizildeli argued that Turkey was not looking at NATO as a "back door" to participating in the stabilization force in Iraq. Iraq was very important to Turkey, and the GOT did not want its stability left in the hands of "Honduras and the Philippines" when everyone else lost interest. Kizildeli said Turkey was watching European defense structures develop with great interest but was not yet alarmed. The Europeans don't yet have a "strategic vision," so Turkey is not yet worried. As an EU aspirant, Turkey was participating in discussions on ESDP to the extent allowed and hoped to one day fully benefit from European strategic cooperation.

TRAFFICKING REPORT

18. (C) Americas DG Banguoglu said that the GOT was disappointed that Turkey was included as a Tier III country in the Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report. Using many of the same points the Minister of Interior used with the Ambassador later that same day (ref c), Banguoglu argued that Turkey should be removed from the list altogether.

19. (U) DAS Pascoe has cleared this message.
PEARSON